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DEVELOPMENTS IN THE AFTERMATH OF  
US AND UK TROOP WITHDRAWALS  
FROM LEBANON AND JORDAN

Submitted by the  
DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

*The following intelligence organizations participated in the preparation of this estimate: The Central Intelligence Agency and the intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, and The Joint Staff.*

Concurred in by the  
UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

*on 28 October 1958. Concurring were The Director of Intelligence and Research, Department of State; the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army; the Director of Naval Intelligence; the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, USAF; the Director for Intelligence, The Joint Staff; the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense, Special Operations; and the Director of the National Security Agency. The Atomic Energy Commission Representative to the USIB and the Assistant Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, abstained, the subject being outside of their jurisdiction.*

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## DEVELOPMENTS IN THE AFTERMATH OF US AND UK TROOP WITHDRAWALS FROM LEBANON AND JORDAN

### THE ESTIMATE

1. The presence of US and UK troops in Lebanon and Jordan slowed down the trend in both countries toward seizure of control by local forces sympathetic to the UAR. The landing of these forces has not, however, changed basic trends in the area and developments in both countries will continue in the direction of neutralism and accommodations with Pan-Arab nationalism.

2. The most significant immediate consequence of the withdrawal of US and UK troops will be to remove one of the most important props which hold up the shaky regime of King Hussein, thus increasing the danger of its overthrow and the likelihood of Israeli and UAR intervention.<sup>1</sup> The danger of a move to overthrow the regime will be particularly great during Hussein's anticipated absence abroad in November.

3. We believe that the withdrawal of Western troops will not of itself automatically and precipitately lead to widespread hostilities: the withdrawal has been widely anticipated; the governments of the area are aware of the possibility that the collapse of the Jordanian regime could lead to an Arab-Israeli war; and these governments probably do not desire such a war at the present time. Nevertheless, the situation, especially in Jordan, will be deli-

cate. Nasser may miscalculate the risks in the situation and Arab extremists both in and out of Jordan might take independent action to overthrow the regime.

### LEBANON

4. The withdrawal of US forces from Lebanon is not likely to produce any marked or sudden change in the situation in that country. The struggle between the Christian and Moslem elements is likely to continue for some time and to involve occasional resort to force, but we believe that large-scale outbreaks in the near future are not likely.

5. The future of Lebanon's present compromise government and, indeed, of President Chehab is not clear. The preferential position of the Christians in political life has been seriously weakened, and the Moslems may seek to push their gains to the point where the Christians will feel compelled to strike back in force.

### JORDAN

6. In the face of threats by the UAR and by Jordanian Pan-Arab nationalists, Hussein has been sustained by the Jordanian Army and by the aid and support of the US and UK. Another force counteracting Arab nationalist pressures has been Israel, which has threatened to intervene in Jordan in the event of the overthrow of Hussein's regime.

7. Maneuverings designed to reduce pressures upon Hussein and to allow him to remain on the throne after the withdrawal of the British troops have been underway in Jordan. If

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these are to be successful they must involve such concessions to the Pan-Arab nationalists as release of political prisoners and the removal of the openly pro-Western Samir Rifai as Prime Minister. Furthermore Rifai's successor will have to be a politician acceptable to the extreme nationalist forces. Although there are a number of pro-Hussein politicians in Jordan who would be willing to make a try at rapprochement with Nasser, we believe it unlikely that Hussein himself has much taste for such an arrangement. He probably also believes that any such arrangement would be short-lived. It is possible, though unlikely, that Hussein will not return to Jordan from his November trip.

8. If Hussein continues his present government and policies after the withdrawal of UK troops, we believe chances are better than even that he will be overthrown within a few months. The scheduled absence of Hussein from the country in the course of the coming two months will provide a particularly tempting opportunity for the opposition to move against the monarchy.

9. There are indications that the Jordanian regime may seek a rapprochement with Iraq as a means of appeasing Pan-Arab sentiment without capitulating to the UAR. At least under its present leadership, however, the Iraqi Government is not likely to prove receptive to overtures from the current Jordanian regime.

#### UAR

10. Nasser probably believes that important progress has been made for his cause in Lebanon since the outbreak of the insurrection last spring, and he will continue to encourage the pro-UAR Moslem group to establish its dominance and bring Lebanon into close alignment with the UAR. Nasser may choose to move slowly in Lebanon. However, relations with the Moslem leaders in Lebanon are prin-

cipally in the hands of Syrian Minister of Interior Serraj, who is much less restrained than Nasser and likely to continue strong covert efforts on behalf of the pro-UAR group in Lebanon.

11. With respect to Jordan, Nasser would almost certainly prefer the evolution of a cooperative Jordanian regime which would not provide Israel with the occasion to intervene forcibly and which would, at least in the early stages, avoid loss of Western economic assistance to Jordan. However, here too his hand may be forced by the activities of Serraj or local Pan-Arab extremists.

#### ISRAEL

12. Israel is unlikely to make any move in direct response to the withdrawal of US and UK troops, but it will hold its forces in readiness in case the troop withdrawal leads to events in Jordan which it feels require intervention. Even if the movement of Jordan toward the UAR is gradual and peaceful, the danger will remain that Israel will at some point move to forestall the establishment of UAR forces west of the Jordan.

#### THE USSR

13. The USSR is unlikely to respond to US and UK troop withdrawals except by beating the usual propaganda drums against Western "imperialism." It is unlikely to intervene more directly in the situation unless an Arab-Israeli war appears imminent, in which case it is likely to respond with threats to the West and Israel. The USSR is unlikely to take further steps without Nasser's concurrence. As we have estimated elsewhere,<sup>2</sup> however, the Soviets are unlikely to take actions which they believe would involve serious risk of war with the West.

<sup>2</sup> See SNIE 30-2-58, "The Middle East Crisis," 22 July 1958, paragraphs 18-22.

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